

## Wise men from the east

Unfortunately, our tradition in oral and visual arts centered around Christmas have misled us about the wise men. If you read the records given in the Scriptures you will find the facts about these mysterious men who visited Mary, Joseph, and the Christ in Bethlehem.

All we can say for certain is that there were at least two men and three gifts. We know that they did not come to visit Christ when He lay in a stable, but about one and a half years after his birth. Joseph and Mary had not immediately returned to Nazareth where they had previously lived. They had remained in Bethlehem. It is there that the wise men visited them.

How far had these wise men come? Given that they had at least a year, or perhaps even a year and a half, to travel from their homes 'in the East' to Bethlehem, it could have been from as far away as India or China. Why did they come asking such a specific question about Christ and His birth as the King of the Jews when they lived so far away? God used many ways to speak to people before Christ came. God used a star that they understood was special, and led them directly to where Christ was. We must presume that they had some access to the Old Testament Scriptures, because they identified Christ as "the King of the Jews."

There are many other questions we could ask about these mysterious men, but this much we know for certain. They had also followed the star for the right reason. They took the time and resources necessary, and bought expensive gifts, so that they might come and worship Christ the King who had brought in a new age.

The record of their coming has been preserved as a witness from outside of the Jewish religious tradition, that Christ was ushering in the renewal that would accompany His coming.

Just as the wise men followed the star to Bethlehem, so also you are called to give yourself to Christ and to give of yourself to follow Him, and so to live a life which is the worship which He deserves.